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#5 / A. P. S.

# Merriam- Webster's Collegiate<sup>®</sup> Dictionary

ELEVENTH  
EDITION



Merriam-Webster, Incorporated  
Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.



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**in-sus-cep-ti-bile** \in-(t)-sə-'sep-tə-bəl/ *adj* (1603): not susceptible (~ to flattery) — **in-sus-cep-ti-bil-i-ty** \in-(t)-sə-'sep-tə-'bil-ə-tē/ *n* — **in-sus-cep-ti-bly** \in-(t)-sə-'sep-tə-'blē/ *adv*

**int** *abbr* 1 intelligence 2 intercept 3 interest 4 interim 5 interior 6 interjection 7 intermediate 8 internal 9 international 10 interpreter 11 intersection 12 interval 13 interview 14 intransitive

**in-tact** \in-'takt/ *adj* [ME *intacte*, fr. L *intactus*, fr. *in-* + *tactus*, pp. of *tangere* 'to touch' — more at **TANGENT**] (15c) 1: untouched esp. by anything that harms or diminishes: ENTIRE, UNINJURED 2 of a living body or its parts: having no relevant component removed or destroyed: a: physically virginal b: not castrated *syn* see **PERFECT** — **in-tact-ness** \-'tāk(t)-nəs/ *n*

**in-taglio** \in-'tāl(-),-jō, -'tāl-, -'tā-glē-, -'tā-/ *n*, *pl* -*glios* [It; fr. *intagliare* to engrave, cut, fr. ML *intaliare*, fr. L *in-* + LL *taliare* to cut — more at **TAILOR**] (1644) 1 a: an engraving or incised figure in stone or other hard material depressed below the surface so that an impression from the design yields an image in relief b: the art or process of executing intaglios c: printing (as in die stamping and gravure) done from a plate in which the image is sunk below the surface 2: something (as a gem) carved in intaglio



intaglio 1a

**in-take** \in-'tāk/ *n* (15c) 1: an opening through which fluid enters an enclosure 2 a: a taking in b (1): the amount taken in (2): something (as energy) taken in: INPUT

**in-tan-gi-bile** \in-'tan-jə-'bəl/ *adj* [F or ML; F, fr. ML *intangibilis*, fr. L *in-* + LL *tangibilis* tangible] (1640): not tangible: IMPALPABLE (education's ~ benefits) — **in-tan-gi-bil-i-ty** \in-'tan-jə-'bi-lə-tē/ *n* — **in-tan-gi-bly** \in-'tan-jə-'blē/ *adv*

**intangible** *n* (1914): something intangible: as a: an asset (as goodwill) that is not corporeal b: an abstract quality or attribute (as loyalty or creativity)

**in-tar-sia** \in-'tār-sē-ə/ *n* [G, modif. of It *intarsio*] (1867) 1: a mosaic usu. of wood fitted into a support; also: the art or process of making such a mosaic 2: a colored design knitted on both sides of a fabric (as in a sweater)

**in-te-ger** \in-'ti-jər/ *n* [L, *adj.*, whole, entire — more at **ENTIRE**] (1571) 1: any of the natural numbers, the negatives of these numbers, or zero 2: a complete entity

**in-te-gral** \in-'ti-grəl/ *adj* (ca. 1741): capable of being integrated (~ functions) — **in-te-gral-i-ty** \in-'ti-grəl-ə-'bi-lə-tē/ *n*

**in-te-gral** \in-'ti-grəl/ *usu* so in mathematics: **in-te-gral** also **-te-** also **-in-** *adj* (1551) 1 a: essential to completeness: CONSTITUENT (an ~ part of the curriculum) b (1): being, containing, or relating to one or more mathematical integers (2): relating to or concerned with mathematical integrals or integration c: formed as a unit with another part (a seat with ~ headrest) 2: composed of integral parts 3: lacking nothing essential: ENTIRE — **in-te-gral-i-ty** \in-'ti-grəl-ə-'bi-lə-tē/ *n* — **in-te-gral-ly** \in-'ti-grəl-ē/ *adv*

**integral** *n* (ca. 1741): the result of a mathematical integration — compare **DEFINITE INTEGRAL**, **INDEFINITE INTEGRAL**

**integral calculus** *n* (ca. 1741): a branch of mathematics concerned with the theory and applications (as in the determination of lengths, areas, and volumes and in the solution of differential equations) of integrals and integration

**integral domain** *n* (1937): a mathematical ring in which multiplication is commutative, which has a multiplicative identity element, and which contains no pair of nonzero elements whose product is zero (the integers under the operations of addition and multiplication form an integral domain)

**in-te-grand** \in-'tə-'grand/ *n* [L *integrandus*, gerundive of *integrare*] (1897): a mathematical expression to be integrated

**in-te-grate** \in-'tə-'grāt/ *vb* -*grat*-ed; -*grat*-ing [L *integratus*, pp. of *integrare*, fr. *integr*, *integer*] *vt* (ca. 1586) 1: to form, coordinate, or blend into a functioning or unified whole: UNITE 2: to find the integral of (as a function or equation) 3 a: to unite with something else b: to incorporate into a larger unit 4 a: to end the segregation of and bring into equal membership in society or an organization b: DESEGREGATE (~ school districts) ~ *vi*: to become integrated

**integrated** *adj* (1922) 1: marked by the unified control of all aspects of industrial production from raw materials through distribution of finished products (~ companies) (~ production) 2: characterized by integration and esp. racial integration (an ~ society) (~ schools)

**integrated circuit** *n* (1959): a tiny complex of electronic components and their connections that is produced in or on a small slice of material (as silicon) — **integrated circuitry** *n*

**integrated pest management** *n* (1976): management of agricultural and horticultural pests that minimizes the use of chemicals and emphasizes natural and low-toxicity methods (as the use of crop rotation and beneficial predatory insects)

**in-te-gra-tion** \in-'tə-'grā-shən/ *n* (1620) 1: the act or process or an instance of integrating: as a: incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups (as races) b: coordination of mental processes into a normal effective personality or with the individual's environment 2 a: the operation of finding a function whose differential is known b: the operation of solving a differential equation

**in-te-gra-tion-ist** \-sh(ə)-nist/ *n* (1951): a person who believes in, advocates, or practices social integration — **integrationist** *adj*

**in-te-gra-tive** \in-'tə-'grā-tiv/ *adj* (1862): serving to integrate or favoring integration: directed toward integration (the ~ powers of the human imagination) — J. A. McPherson

**in-te-gra-tor** \-grā-tər/ *n* (1876): one that integrates; esp.: a device or computer unit that totalizes variable quantities in a manner comparable to mathematical integration

**in-te-gri-ty** \in-'tə-'grē-tē/ *n* [ME *integrite*, fr. MF & L; MF *integrité*, fr. L *integratus*, *integratus*, fr. *integr*, *integer* entire] (14c) 1: firm adherence to a code of esp. moral or artistic values: INCORRUPTIBILITY 2: an unimpaired condition: SOUNDNESS 3: the quality or state of being complete or undivided: COMPLETENESS *syn* see **HONESTY**

**in-teg-u-ment** \in-'tə-'gyə-mənt/ *n* [L *integumentum*, fr. *integrare* to cover, fr. *in-* + *tegere* to cover — more at **THATCH**] (ca. 1611): something that covers or encloses; esp.: an enveloping layer (as a skin, membrane, or cuticle) of an organism or one of its parts — **in-teg-u-men-tal** \in-'tə-'gē-ə-əl/ *adj*

**intel** *abbr* intelligence

**in-tel-lect** \in-'tə-'lekt/ *n* [ME, fr. MF or L; MF, fr. L *intellectus*, fr. *intelleger* to understand — more at **INTELLIGENT**] (14c) 1 a: the power of knowing as distinguished from the power to feel and to will; b: capacity for knowledge c: the capacity for rational or intellectual thought esp. when highly developed 2: a person with great intellectual powers

**in-tel-lec-tion** \in-'tə-'lek-shən/ *n* (1579) 1: an act of the intellect; 2: exercise of the intellect: REASONING

**in-tel-lec-tive** \in-'tə-'lekt-iv/ *adj* (15c): having, relating to, or belonging to the intellect: RATIONAL — **in-tel-lec-tive-ly** *adv*

**in-tel-lec-tu-al** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-wəl, -chəl, -shwəl, -chūt(-ə)/ *adj* (14c) 1 a: of or relating to the intellect or its use b: developed or characterized by the intellect rather than by emotion or experience: RATIONAL c: requiring use of the intellect (~ games) 2 a: given a study, reflection, and speculation b: engaged in activity requiring creative use of the intellect (~ playwrights) — **in-tel-lec-tu-al-ly** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-'wə-lē-tē/ *adv* — **in-tel-lec-tu-al-ness** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-'wə-lē-'chəl, -shwəl, -chūt(-ə)/ *n*

**intellectual** *n* (1615) 1 *pl.* *archaic*: intellectual powers 2: an intellectual person

**in-tel-lec-tu-al-ism** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-wə-'li-zəm, -chə-'li-, -shwə-, -chūt(-ə)/ *n* (1838): devotion to the exercise of intellect or to intellectual pursuits — **in-tel-lec-tu-al-ist** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-'li-s-t/ *n* or *adj* — **in-tel-lec-tu-al-istic** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-'wə-'li-s-tik, -chə-'li-s-, -shwə-'li-s-, -chūt(-ə)/ *adj* — **in-tel-lec-tu-al-ize** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-wə-'līz, -chə-'līz, -chūt(-ə)/ *vb* -ized; -iz-ing (ca. 1819): to give rational form or content to — **in-tel-lec-tu-al-i-za-tion** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-wə-'līz-ə-shən, -chə-'līz-, -shwə-'līz-, -chūt(-ə)/ *n* — **in-tel-lec-tu-al-iz-er** \in-'tə-'lek-chə-wə-'līz-ər, -chə-'līz-, -shwə-'līz-, -chūt(-ə)/ *n*

**intellectual property** *n* (1845): property (as an idea, invention, or process) that derives from the work of the mind or intellect; also: a: application, right, or registration relating to this b: the ability to learn, understand, or to deal with new or trying situations: REASON; also: b: skilled use of reason (2): the ability to apply knowledge to maximize one's environment or to think abstractly as measured by objective criteria (as tests) c: mental acuteness: SHREWDNESS 2 a: an intelligent person; esp.: ANGEL b: intelligent minds or mind (cosmic ~) 3: act of understanding: COMPREHENSION 4 a: INFORMATION; esp.: information concerning an enemy or possible enemy or an enemy; also: an agency engaged in obtaining such information 5: the ability to perform computer functions

**intelligence quotient** *n* (1916): IQ

**in-tel-li-gence** \in-'tə-'lə-jənt(-)s/ *n* [ME, fr. MF, fr. L *intelligentia*, *intelligentia* intelligent] (14c) 1 a (1): the ability to learn, understand, or to deal with new or trying situations: REASON; also: b: skilled use of reason (2): the ability to apply knowledge to maximize one's environment or to think abstractly as measured by objective criteria (as tests) c: mental acuteness: SHREWDNESS 2 a: an intelligent person; esp.: ANGEL b: intelligent minds or mind (cosmic ~) 3: act of understanding: COMPREHENSION 4 a: INFORMATION; esp.: information concerning an enemy or possible enemy or an enemy; also: an agency engaged in obtaining such information 5: the ability to perform computer functions

**in-tel-li-gent** \in-'tə-'lə-jənt/ *adj* [L *intelligent*, *intelligentia*, pp. of *intelligere*, *intelligere* to understand, fr. *inter-* + *legere* to gather, select; more at **LEGEND**] (1509) 1 a: having or indicating a high or satisfactory degree of intelligence and mental capacity 2 a: revealing or reflecting good judgment or sound thought: SKILLFUL 2 a: possessing intelligence b: guided or directed by the intellect: RATIONAL c: guided or controlled by a computer; esp.: using a built-in microprocessor for automatic operation, for processing of data, or for greater versatility — compare **DUMB** 7 b: able to produce or process material from digital signals (an ~ copier) — **in-tel-li-gent-ly** \in-'tə-'lə-jənt-ē/ *adv*

**syn** **INTELLIGENT**, **CLEVER**, **ALERT**, **QUICK-WITTED** mean keen or quick. **INTELLIGENT** stresses success in coping with situations and solving problems (an intelligent person could solve a problem). **CLEVER** implies native ability or aptness and sometimes a lack of more substantial qualities (clever with words). **ALERT** stresses quickness in perceiving and understanding (alert to new technology). **QUICK-WITTED** implies promptness in finding answers in or in devising expedients in moments of danger or challenge (a quick-witted opponent).

**in-tel-li-gent-sia** \in-'tə-'lə-jənt(-)sē-ə, -'gent(-)s/ *n* [Russ *intelligentsia*, *intelligentsia* intelligent] (1907): intellectuals who form the social, or political vanguard or elite

**in-tel-li-gi-bile** \in-'tə-'lə-'jə-bəl/ *adj* [ME, fr. L *intelligibilis*, fr. *intelligere* to understand, fr. *in-* + *legere* to gather, select; more at **LEGEND**] (14c) 1: apprehensible by the intellect only 2: capable of being understood or comprehended (jargon ~ only to the initiated) — **in-tel-li-gi-bil-i-ty** \in-'tə-'lə-'jə-'bi-lə-tē/ *n* — **in-tel-li-gi-bly** \in-'tə-'lə-'jə-'blē/ *adv*

**in-tem-per-ance** \in-'təm-p(ə-)rənt(-)s/ *n* (15c): lack of moderation; esp.: habitual or excessive drinking of intoxicants

**in-tem-per-ate** \in-'təm-p(ə-)rət/ *adj* [ME *intemperare*, fr. L *intemperare* + *temperare*, pp. of *temperare* to temper] (14c): not temperate; esp.: given to excessive use of intoxicating liquors

**tem-per-ate-ly** \in-'təm-p(ə-)rət-ē/ *adv* — **in-tem-per-ate-ness** *n*

**in-tend** \in-'tend/ *vb* [ME *entenden*, *intenden*, fr. AF *entendre*, *tendere* to stretch out, direct, aim at, fr. *in-* + *tendere* to stretch out] *vt* (14c) 1: to direct the mind on 2 *archaic*: to intend (a course) 3 a: SIGNIFY, MEAN b: to refer to 4 a: to have as a purpose or goal: PLAN b: to design for a specified use — *vi.* *archaic*: SET OUT, START — **in-tend-er** *n*

**in-ten-dance** \in-'tend-ənt(-)s/ *n* (1739) 1: MANAGEMENT; esp.: an administrative department

**in-ten-dant** \in-'tend-ənt/ *n* [F, fr. MF, fr. L *intendens*, *intendens* tending to intend, attend] (1652): an administrative official (not esp. under the French, Spanish, or Portuguese monarchs)

**intended** *adj* (15c) 1: expected to be such in the future (her ~ husband) 2: INTENTIONAL — **in-tend-ed-ly** *adv*

**intended** *n* (1767): the person to whom another is engaged

**intending** *adj* (178)

**in-tend-ment** \in-'tend-mənt/ *n*

esp. of a law

**in-ten-er-ate** \in-'tə-'n(ə)-rāt/ *adj* — more at **TE**

**in-tense** \in-'tens/ *adj* (15c)

to stretch out] (15c)

ment was ~) (~

extreme degree (~

energy, determinate

strong feeling or e

fell — **in-tense-ly**

**in-ten-si-fier** \in-'tens-i-fī-ər/ *n*

**INTENSIVE**

**in-ten-si-fy** \in-'tens-i-fī-/ *vb* -ten-

tense or more inte

tense and contrast of (a

make more acute:

live; grow stronger

~shon, -ten(-)s-

**in-ten-sion** \in-'ten-

shon 3 — **in-ten-**

shon-ə-l-ty/ *n*, *ten(-)shon* *n*

**in-ten-sive-ness**

**intensive** *n* (1813)

**intensive care** *n*

seriously ill patient

a unit in a hospital

(the care) ~

**in-ten-t** \in-'tənt/ *n*

stretching out, fr.

**PURPOSE**; esp.: the

intention (admitted

which) an act is d

planned intention

**CANCELS** b: CONN-

**intend** \in-'tend/ *vb* -tend-

intend (adj) *int.*

strained or eager a

tion or will con

on their work) ~

**in-ten-tion** \in-'tən(-)shən/ *n*

**intention** *n* (15c)

**intention** *n* (15c)

**intention** *n* (15c)

**intention** *n* (15c)

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**intention** *n* (15c)

**intention** *n* (15c)

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# RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER'S UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY

Second Edition

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l and n can serve as syllabic consonants, as in *cradle* (kradl) and *button* (but'n). See the full key inside the front cover.

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## traumatic

**melancholy**: from Latin *atra bilis* 'black bile' (translation of Greek *melankholia* 'melancholy').

**traumatic** ► adjective (of a medical or surgical procedure) causing minimal tissue injury.

**atrazine** /'atrəzi:n/ ► noun [mass noun] a synthetic compound derived from triazine, used as an agricultural herbicide.

ORIGIN 1960s: blend of **AMINO** and **TRIAZINE**.

**atremble** ► adjective [predic.] poetic/literary trembling.

**atresia** /ə'tri:ʒiə, -ziə/ ► noun [mass noun] 1 Medicine absence or abnormal narrowing of an opening or passage in the body.

2 Physiology the degeneration of those ovarian follicles which do not ovulate during the menstrual cycle.

ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from A- 'without' + Greek *trēsis* 'perforation' + -ia.

**Atreus** /'eɪtrɪəs/ Greek Mythology the son of Pelops and father of Agamemnon and Menelaus. He quarrelled with his brother Thyestes and invited him to a banquet at which he served up the flesh of Thyestes' own children.

**atrioventricular** /'eɪtriə(v)ən'trɪkjʊlə/ ► adjective 1 Anatomy & Physiology relating to the atrial and ventricular chambers of the heart, or the connection or coordination between them.

**atrium** /'eɪtriəm/ ► noun (pl. *atria* /'eɪtriə/ or *atriums*) 1 Architecture an open-roofed entrance hall or central court in an ancient Roman house.

2 a central hall or court in a modern building, typically rising through several stories and having a glazed roof. 3 the forecourt of a large church built on the basilican plan.

2 Anatomy each of the two upper cavities of the heart from which blood is passed to the ventricles. The right atrium receives deoxygenated blood from the veins of the body, the left atrium oxygenated blood from the pulmonary vein. Also called **AURICLE**.

DERIVATIVES **atrial** adjective.

ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from Latin.

**atrocious** ► adjective 1 horrifyingly wicked: atrocious cruelties.

2 of a very poor quality: extremely bad or unpleasant: he attempted an atrocious imitation of my English accent | atrocious weather.

DERIVATIVES **atrociously** adverb, **atrociousness** noun.

ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin *atrox*, *atroc-* 'cruel' + -ious.

**atrocities** ► noun (pl. -ies) an extremely wicked or cruel act, typically one involving physical violence or injury: a textbook which detailed war atrocities | [mass noun] scenes of hardship and atrocity.

3 humorous a highly unpleasant or distasteful object: atrocities in cheap red nylon.

ORIGIN mid 16th cent. (in the sense 'cruelty'): from French *atrocité* or Latin *atrocitas*, from *atrox*, *atroc-* 'cruel'.

**atrophy** /'atrəfi/ ► verb (-ies, -ied) [no obj.] (of body tissue or an organ) waste away, especially as a result of the degeneration of cells, or become vestigial during evolution: the calf muscles will atrophy | [as adj. **atrophied**] in some beetles, the hindwings are atrophied.

4 figurative gradually decline in effectiveness or vigour due to underuse or neglect: the imagination can atrophy from lack of use.

► noun [mass noun] the condition or process of atrophying: gastric atrophy.

DERIVATIVES **atrophic** adjective.

ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from French *atrophier* (verb), *atrophie* (noun), from late Latin *atrophia*, from Greek, 'lack of food', from *a-* 'without' + *trophē* 'food'.

**atropine** /'atrəpi:n, -ɪn/ ► noun [mass noun] Chemistry a poisonous compound found in deadly nightshade and related plants. It is used in medicine as a muscle relaxant, e.g. in dilating the pupil of the eye.

5 An alkaloid; chem. formula:  $C_{17}H_{23}NO_3$ .

ORIGIN mid 19th cent.: modern Latin *Atropa belladonna* 'deadly nightshade', from **ATROPOS** + -ine.

**Atropos** /'atrəpəs/ Greek Mythology one of the three Fates.

ORIGIN Greek, literally 'inflexible'.

**attaboy** ► exclamation an informal expression of encouragement or admiration, typically to a man or boy.

ORIGIN early 20th cent.: probably representing a casual pronunciation of *that's the boy*.

**attacca** /ə'takə/ ► imperative verb a musical instruction used to indicate that the next section should follow without a pause.

ORIGIN Italian, literally 'attack'.

**attach** ► verb [with obj.] **fasten; join: he ensured the trailer was securely attached to the minibus.**

1 fasten (a related document) to another: I attach a copy of the memo for your information. 2 include (a condition) as part of an agreement: the Commission can attach appropriate conditions to the operation of the agreement. 3 ascribe (value or importance) to something: he doesn't attach too much importance to fixed ideas. 4 (no obj.) (attach to) (of importance or value) be ascribed to: a good deal of prominence attaches to the central union federations. 5 (attach oneself to) join (someone or something) without being invited: they were all too ready to attach themselves to you for the whole day. 6 (usu. be attached) appoint (someone) for special or temporary duties: I was attached to another working group. 7 Law, archaic seize (a person or property) by legal authority: the Earl Marshal attached Gloucester for high treason.

DERIVATIVES **attachable** adjective.

ORIGIN Middle English (in the sense 'seize by legal authority'): from Old French *atachier* or *estachier* 'fasten, fix', based on an element of Germanic origin related to **STAKE**; compare with **ATTACK**.

**attaché** /ə'taʃeɪ/ ► noun 1 a person on the staff of an ambassador, typically one having a specialized area of responsibility: naval and air attachés.

2 N. Amer. short for **ATTACHÉ CASE**.

ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from French, literally 'attached', past participle of *attacher*.

**attaché case** ► noun a small, flat, rigid, rectangular case used for carrying documents.

**attached** ► adjective 1 joined or fastened to something: please complete the attached form.

2 (of a building or room) adjacent to and typically connected with another building or room: a ground-floor bedroom with a toilet attached.

3 full of affection or fondness: during the journey Mark became increasingly attached to Tara.

4 (predic.) (attached to) (of a person) appointed to (an organization or group) for special or temporary duties: he was attached to Military Intelligence.

5 (of an organization or body) affiliated to (another larger organization or body): a science policy agency attached to the Council of Ministers.

**attachment** ► noun 1 an extra part or extension that is or may be attached to something to perform a particular function: the processor comes complete with a blender attachment.

2 (mass noun) the condition of being attached to something or someone, in particular:

1 affection, fondness, or sympathy for someone or something: she felt a sentimental attachment to the place where she grew up. 2 (count noun) an affectionate relationship between two people: he formed an attachment with a young widow. 3 Brit. temporary secondment to an organization: the students are placed on attachment to schools for one day a week.

3 (mass noun) the action of attaching something: the case has a loop for attachment to your waist belt.

4 legal seizure of property.

PHRASES **attachment of earnings** English Law payment of debts by direct deduction from the debtor's earnings, under a court order.

ORIGIN late Middle English (in the sense 'arrest for contempt of court'): from Old French *attachement*, from *atachier* 'fasten, fix' (see **ATTACH**).

**attack** ► verb [with obj.] take aggressive action against (a place or enemy forces) with weapons or armed force, typically in a battle or war: in February the Germans attacked Verdun | [no obj.] the terrorists did not attack again until March.

1 (of a person or animal) act against (someone or something) aggressively in an attempt to injure or kill: a doctor was attacked by two youths. 2 (of a disease, chemical, or insect) act harmfully on: HIV is thought to attack certain cells in the brain. 3 criticize or oppose fiercely and publicly: he attacked the government's defence policy. 4 begin to deal with (a problem or task) in a determined and vigorous way: a plan of action to attack unemployment. 5 (no obj.) make an aggressive or forceful attempt to score a goal or point or gain or exploit an advantage in a game against an opposing team or player: Crystal Palace attacked swiftly down the left | [as adj. **attacking**] Leeds showed some good attacking play. 6 [with obj.] Chess move into or be in a position to capture (an opponent's piece or pawn).

► noun 1 an aggressive and violent act against a person or place: he was killed in an attack on the checkpoint | three classrooms were gutted in the arson attack.

2 (mass noun) destructive action by a disease, chemical, or insect: the tissue is open to attack by fungus. 3 a sudden short bout of an illness or stress: an attack of nausea | an asthma attack. 4 an instance of fierce public criticism or opposition: he launched a stinging attack on the Prime Minister. 5 a determined attempt to tackle a problem or task: an attack on inflation. 6 (mass noun) Music the manner of beginning to play or sing a passage. 7 (mass noun) forceful and decisive style in performing music or another art: the sheer attack of Hendrix's playing. 8 an aggressive attempt to score a goal, win points, or gain or exploit an advantage in a game. 9 the players in a team who are in the position of trying to score a goal or win points: Baxter was recalled to the attack. 10 Chess a threat to capture an opponent's piece or pawn.

PHRASES **under attack** subject to aggressive, violent, or harmful action: the north-western suburbs came under attack in the latest fighting.

ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from French *attaque* (noun), *attaquer* (verb), from Italian *attacco* 'an attack', *attaccare* 'join battle', based on an element of Germanic origin (see **ATTACH**).

**attacker** ► noun a person or animal that attacks someone or something.

1 (in football and other games) a player whose task is to attack the other side's goal in the attempt to score; a forward.

**attagirl!** ► exclamation an informal expression of encouragement or admiration to a woman or girl.

ORIGIN 1920s: on the pattern of *attaboy*.

**attain** ► verb [with obj.] succeed in achieving (something that one desires and has worked for): clarify your objectives and ways of attaining them | he attained the rank of Brigadier | human beings can attain happiness.

1 reach (a specified age, size, or amount): dolphins can attain speeds in water which man cannot yet emulate.

DERIVATIVES **attainability** noun, **attainable** adjective, **attainableness** noun.

ORIGIN Middle English (in the senses 'bring to justice' and 'reach (a state)'): from Old French *ateindre*, from Latin *attingere*, from *ad-* 'at, to' + *tangere* 'to touch'.

**attainder** /ə'teɪndə/ ► noun historical the forfeiture of land and civil rights suffered as a consequence of a sentence of death for treason or felony.

PHRASES **act (or bill) of attainder** an item of legislation inflicting attainder without judicial process.

ORIGIN late Middle English: from Anglo-Norman French, variant (used as a noun) of Old French *ateindre* in the sense 'convict, bring to justice' (see **ATTAIN**).

**attainment** ► noun [mass noun] the action or fact of achieving a goal towards which one has worked: the attainment of corporate aims.

1 (count noun) (often attainments) a thing achieved, especially a skill or educational achievement.

**attaint** ► verb [with obj.] 1 (usu. be attainted) historical subject to attainder.

2 archaic affect or infect with disease or corruption.

ORIGIN Middle English (in the sense 'touch, reach, attain'): from obsolete *attaint* (adjective), from Old French *ataint*, *ateint*, past participle of *ateindre* 'bring to justice' (see **ATTAIN**); influenced in meaning by **TAINT**.

**Attalid** /'atəlɪd/ ► noun a member of a Hellenistic dynasty named after Attalus I (reigned 241-197 BC), which flourished in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.

► adjective of or relating to this dynasty.

**atap** /'atəp/ (also **atap**) ► noun [mass noun] thatch made in SE Asia from palm fronds.

ORIGIN early 19th cent.: from Malay *atap* 'roof, thatch'.

**attar** /'atə/ (also **otto**) ► noun a fragrant essential oil, typically made from rose petals.

ORIGIN late 17th cent.: via Persian from Arabic 'itr 'perfume, essence'.

**attempt** ► verb [with obj.] make an effort to achieve or complete (something, typically a difficult task or action): she attempted a comeback in 1989 | [with infinitive] troops shot civilians who attempted to flee.

1 try to climb to the top of (a mountain): the expedition was the first to attempt Panch Chuli V. 2 archaic try to take (a life): he would not have attempted the life of a friend.

► noun an act of trying to achieve something, typically